

**Arizona Newborn Screening Program:
For Your Baby's Health**

**SICKLE CELL TRAIT
ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. What is sickle cell trait?

People with sickle cell trait have two kinds of a certain substance in their red blood cells. This substance carries oxygen from the lungs to all body parts. One kind is more common than the other. If you have sickle cell trait, you have more of the unusual kind of this substance. You will lead a normal life, and it is important that you and your doctor know if your baby has sickle cell trait.

2. Will sickle cell trait hurt my baby?

Your baby does not have a disease. Your baby with sickle cell trait will never get sickle cell disease. Babies with sickle cell trait are usually healthy. In general, if you have sickle cell trait, you do not have any significant symptoms, and you live a normal life.

3. Why is it important for me to know about sickle cell trait and to tell my child?

If you have sickle cell trait, and if your partner also has sickle cell trait, you may have children with sickle cell trait. If your baby has sickle cell trait, it is important that both parents and all other children are tested. A test should be done on older children or adults in the family, too, if sickle cell trait is in question.

If your baby ever gets sick, this should help the doctor know sickle cell disease is not the problem. Always tell your doctor your baby was tested for sickle cell trait.

4. How Does the Newborn Screening Program Test for Sickle Cell Disease?

All babies in Arizona are tested for certain disorders regardless of race or ethnic background. A few days after your baby was born, a tiny sample of blood was taken from your baby's heel. The blood sample was sent to the Arizona Department of Health Services for testing. The test results showed that your baby does not have sickle cell disease, but may have sickle cell trait.

5. How Did My Baby Get Sickle Cell Trait?

Babies can inherit sickle cell trait just like eye color or hair color. If your baby was born with sickle cell trait, your baby will always have it. When a parent has one normal gene and one sickle cell gene, the parent has a trait, and the parent is called a carrier.

Carriers do not have any problems from the one sickle cell gene.

For additional information, call your baby's doctor.